

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 02345 260313Z

64

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3181

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

DIA WASHDC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, MY, TH

SUBJECT: MILITARY OPERATION AGAINST COMMUNIST TERRORISTS IN THAT
BORDER AREA AND OTHER SECURITY RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) KUALA LUMPUR 2287 (DTG 220517Z APR 76)

(B) KUALA LUMPUR 2288 (DTG 220935Z APR 76)

1. SUMMARY. LOCAL PRESS NOW HAS REPORTED MAJOR COMBINED FORCES
COUNTER TERRORIST OPERATION UNDER IN AREA ALONG THAI BORDER.
HOWEVER, COMMUNIST TERRORISTS (CT'S) APPARENTLY SUCCEEDED
IN ESCAPING BEFORE ATTACKING GOM FORCES CAPTURED THEIR CAMP
APRIL 22. PRESS CITED AP REPORT OUT OF BANGKOK THAI POLICE
HAVE REQUESTED MALAYSIAN COUNTERPARTS INFORM THEM IN ADVANCE
BEFORE USING HEAVY WEAPONS IN "HOT PURSUIT" CLASHES WITH
TERRORISTS ALONG THAI BORDER. IN SEPARATE DEVELOPMENTS PRESS
REPORTED EXISTENCE OF CLANDESTINE CPM-M/L RADIO STATION
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PAGE 02 KUALA 02345 260313Z

AND ABORTIVE CT ATTEMPT TO MINE RAILWAY BRIDGE ON MAIN

RAIL ONE AT MENTAKAB, NEAR TEMERLOH, PAHANG STATE.
END SUMMARY.

2. APRIL 23 PRESS ACKNOWLEDGED MAJOR OPERATION INVOLVING 3,000 MALAYSIAN TROOPS NOW UNDERWAY IN ULU MUDA FOREST RESERVE NEAR THAI BORDER. DETACHMENT OF COMMANDOS, SUPPORTED BY AIR STROKES, FOUND CT CAMP EMPTY OF ALL BUT COMMUNIST DOCUMENTS FOLLOWING ASSAULT APRIL 22 (SEE REFTELS FOR BACKGROUND). THREE COMMANDOS WOUNDED BY BOOBY TRAPS DURING OPERATION. HUNT NOW UNDERWAY TO TRACK DOWN CT'S WHO FLED CAMP. PRESS REPORTS CITED AP ITEM FROM BANGKOK QUOTING THAI POLICE AUTHORITIES AS SAYING THAT MALAYSIAN JET FIGHTERS BOMBED AND STRAFED SUSPECTED CT POSITIONS IN THAILAND IN APPARENT VIOLATION OF A GROUND RULE ALLOWING MALAYSIAN TROOPS RIGHT OF "HOT PURSUIT" INTO A NARROW STRIP OF THAI BORDER TERRITORY BUT NOT AUTHORIZING USE OF HEAVY WEAPONS (SIC). MALAYSIAN JETS REPORTEDLY ATTACKED AREAS IN WANG RAI VILLAGE OF BETONG DISTRICT. THAI POLICE SPOKESMAN QUOTED AS SAYING THAT MALAYSIA MUST RESPECT THAI SOVEREIGNTY AND BE MINDFUL OF DESTRUCTION CAUSED BY HEAVY WEAPONS (SIC). ACCORDING REPORT, THAI OFFICIALS ALONG BORDER SAID THEY WERE NOT INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF BOMBING INCIDENT AFTER WHICH MALAYSIAN PILOTS CLAIMED TO HAVE MISTAKEN BOMBING SITE FOR A TARGET IN MALAYSIA. JOINT THAI-MALAYSIAN POLICE INVESTIGATION TEAM VISITED AREA, AND MALAYSIANS REPORTEDLY TOLD THAI COUNTER-PARTS AREA WAS A MAJOR HIDEOUT OF CT'S. REPORT CONCLUDED BY CITING CLAIMS BY UNIDENTIFIED SOURCES THAT MORE THAN 1,000 ARMED CT'S NOW CONTROL MOST OF BETONG DISTRICT'S 35,300 THAI RESIDENTS.

3. IN SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, APRIL 23 PRESS REPORTED FINDING OF FOUR HOME MADE BOMBS PLANTED AT A RAILWAY BRIDGE ON MAIN LINE AT MENTAKAH, NEAR TEMERLOH, IN CENTRALLY LOCATED STATE OF PAHANG, APRIL 22. COMMUNIST FLAGS ALSO FOUND AT SITE. ARMY BOMB EXPERTS REMOVED DEVICES, WHICH ACCORDING PRESS ACCOUNTS AUTHORITIES BELIEVED AIMED AT DERAILING TROOP TRAIN NORTHBOUND TO KELANTAN.
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PAGE 03 KUALA 02345 260313Z

4. MALAYSIAN NATIONAL NEWS SERVICE "BERNAMA" ON APRIL 21 REPORTED EXISTENCE OF CLANDESTINE RADIO STATION BROADCASTING ON BEHALF OF MARXIST-LENINIST FACTION OF COMMUNISTS (CPM-M/L). RADIO SERVICE CALLS ITSELF "SUARA RAKYAT MALAYA" (VOICE OF THE MALAYAN PEOPLE) AND HAS A WEAKER SIGNAL THAN "SUARA REVOLUSI MALAYA" (VOICE OF THE MALAYAN REVOLUTION--VMR), CPM RADIO

SERVICE (BEAMED FROM CHINA), WHICH HAS BEEN ATTACKING CPM-M/L, AND WHICH IT SEEMS DESIGNED TO COUNTER. GOM OFFICIALS SAID TO BELIEVE BROADCASTS EMANATING FROM "AN ASIAN COMMUNIST COUNTRY." BERNAMA REPORT NOTED MALAYSIAN AUTHORITIES NOT CONCERNED BY NEW RADIO SINCE ITS BROADCASTS NOT ONLY WEAK AND IRREGULAR IN TIMING BUT ALSO MAINLY DIRECTED AT CPM. NEW STATION ALSO SEEN AS LOGICAL OUTGROWTH OF COMPETITION BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS THAT HAS INCLUDED ARMED CLASHES EARLY THIS YEAR IN SOUTHERN THAILAND OVER CONTROL OF TERRITORY AND "MASSES." FEATURE IN APRIL 23 "NEW STRAITS TIMES" (NST) DATED LINED BETONG BY REUTER CORRESPONDENT RESIDENT IN K.L. AMPLIFIED SPECULATION ON LOCATION OF TRANSMITTER, NOTING THAT UNIDENTIFIED "OFFICIALS" BELIEVE CPM-M/L MAY BE RECEIVING SOME SOVIET BACKING AND HENCE DO NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY BROADCASTS ARE COMING FROM "HANOI CONTROLLED TERRITORY."

5. COMMENT: QUESTION OF "HOT PURSUIT" GROUND RULES BETWEEN RTG AND GOM AN INTERESTING ONE. ACCORDING TO GOM MFA OFFICIAL, MALAYSIAN TROOPS DID NOT VIOLATE THAI BORDER NOR DID AIR FORCE PLANES BOMB INSIDE THAILAND. ONLY INCURSION WAS BY JETS WHICH SWUNG INTO THAI TERRITORY TO BEGIN LONG STRAFING RUNS OVER CT POSITIONS WHICH WERE ENTIRELY WITHIN MALAYSIA; LOCAL GOM MILITARY COMMANDER INFORMED THAI GENERAL SAN OF THIS OPERATION BEFORE THE FACT ACCORDING TO MFA SOURCE. ON SUBJECT OF NEW COMMUNIST RADIO STATION, PRESS SPECULATION IT IS PART OF THE SINO-SOVIET EQUATION PARALLELED VIEWS OF BRIG, GEN. DATUK JAAFAR ONN, COMMANDING GENERAL IN PERAK STATE, WHO PRIVATELY TOLD US HE "PERSONALLY" BELIEVES THE SOVIETS ARE INVOLVED WITH THE CPM-M/L. WE HAVE YET TO SEE CONVINCING EVIDENCE OF SUCH A LINKAGE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 KUALA 02345 260313Z

HOWEVER.
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